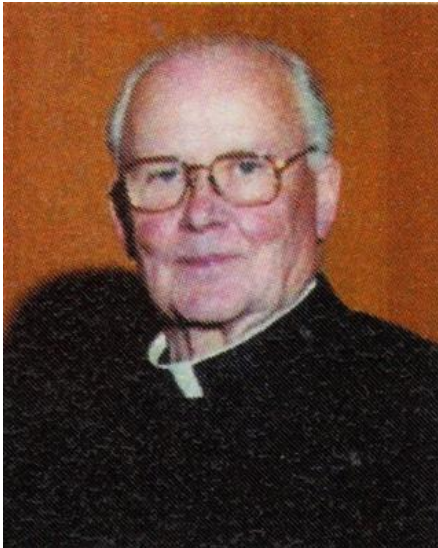


## Very Rev Monsignor James K. Brennan



Irishman Fr James Brennan was born at Ballyhale, County Kilkenny on the 29th November 1920 son of Patrick Brennan from Ballintee and Joanna m.s. Walsh from Ballyhale. He was educated at Ballyhale Primary School, St Kieran's Secondary School Kilkenny and at St Kiernan's Seminary College, Kilkenny.

He was ordained on 10th June 1945 for the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh by The Most Reverend Dr Collier, Bishop of Ossory and until his retirement, he spent all of his priestly life here in Scotland serving in 2 Dioceses.

His first position was as Assistant Priest at St Patrick's in Edinburgh where he served between 1945 and 1947 before coming here to St Patrick's Kilsyth where he served as one of several assistant Priests to Canon Downey and then after Canon Downey's death, Canon McGarvey.

Fr Brennan is remembered in Kilsyth as an outstandingly handsome man who was very interesting to speak with on a range of subjects and who was obviously academic. His lectures in the Parish halls during Lenten preparation, on the Life of Christ or aspects of the Gospel texts, were very popular in the post war years as people flocked to hear his views. He is also remembered as a great preacher and a Priest who could hold the full attention of the congregation throughout his detailed sermons.

Even in general conversation he was clearly as knowledgeable about secular matters as he was about religious affairs. One parishioner remembered that he was able to explain how both Radio and Television broadcasting worked for parishioners who were thinking about buying a television or a radio for the Queen's Coronation in 1953! His technical skills were renown as later in life he was to build a light aircraft and fly it from Ireland to Scotland.

It came as no surprise therefore that after leaving St Patrick's Kilsyth this very able man was appointed as Spiritual Director of Blairs Junior Seminary in Aberdeenshire from 1961-1966, where he was to instruct the young seminarians. He was to return there just over a year later in 1967 as Rector of the Seminary where he stayed for a seven-year period until 1974, having interspersed his periods at Blairs with a short stay as Parish Priest at St Mary's Glenrothes in Fife.

After his tenure as Rector of Blairs he remained in the Diocese of Aberdeen from 1974-1977 at St Mary's, Fochabers, as Parish Priest. In 1977, he returned to the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh and indeed once again to the Deanery of St Ninian, to serve for 11 years as Parish Priest of St Alexander's, Denny, until 1988. His final appointment in Scotland was to serve the parish of St Mary of the Assumption, Bo'ness, as Parish Priest, where he was to eventually oversee the building of the new church there.

He retired at the age of 74 to Ballyhale, County Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1995. Only a week before his death he was diagnosed with leukaemia. He died peacefully at 11.00am on Thursday 26th November

2009, at his home there. He was 88 years of age. His funeral took place from the Church of St Martin of Tours in Ballyhale in the Diocese of Ossory on Saturday 28th Nov 2009.



**The Most Reverend, Dr Collier, Bishop of Ossory**

**Funeral Mass of monsignor James K Brennan at St Martin's Church, Ballyhale, Co Kilkenny, Ireland.**

**Homily preached by Father Eamon Aylward, Saturday 28th November 2009.**

**Introduction:** We give thanks for the life of my uncle. Good man and good priest who dedicated his life to God's people and to those in need.

**Homily:** My uncle Jim Brennan was born in the house in the next field to this church, and now after a full and eventful life he returns here for us to bid him farewell from this earth. In saying goodbye, we remember that *"he whom we love and lose is no longer where he was before, he is now wherever we are"*.

He was the youngest of six siblings, all of whom are now deceased. Only two of the six siblings had children, his two sisters Eileen and Maureen - my mother. Eileen married into the Washes of Kilcready and my mother married Ned Aylward and they lived in Dublin. He had eight nieces and nephews between Kilcready and Dublin. He was ordained in St Kieran's College in 1945 and

spent all of his priestly life in the Archdiocese of St Andrew's and Edinburgh in Scotland, until his return to Kilcready on his retirement. His various pastoral appointments in Scotland you will find in the Mass booklet.

Most of us when attending the funeral of anyone, we go because we feel for the void, the pain left in our own lives because of the death of someone close, or we feel the pain left in the hearts of our friends or neighbours through their experience of death. Death forces us if you like, to a recognition of our connectedness to one another as a human community. Death invites us to come out of ourselves to reach out to others. The people who grieve experience the concern, the support and the love of others, which as we all know is of great assistance in our grief. And those who offer that support and concern for us, feel good in themselves in having reached out or feel part of something bigger than themselves. While all of this is very positive, uplifting and good, I believe that an experience of death, a funeral, also provides all of us to reflect on our own immortality - our own death. Quite often, some of us choose not to go there. We reflect on our own death not to be morbid, no - it is because this reflection points us back to our own life, to the choices we are making, to what is important and what is not important. There are some very hopeful and helpful words in our scriptures today to assist us in this reflection.

**Isaiah:** *"Will prepare for all the people a banquet of rich food"*. Offering us hope beyond the immortality we experience. *"Remove mourning, destroy death, wipe away the tears from every cheek, take away the people's shame"*. This is especially relevant for us today in our grief and in the shame, we sometimes feel as a Church in the light of the recent scandalous revelations. The road ahead of our grief and our shame is trust in the person of Jesus and the message he proclaimed to us. *"We exult, and we rejoice that he has saved us"*. In the suffering difficulties of life, we can have that confidence that we are saved.

**Romans:** *"Everyone moved by the Spirit is a child of God"*. My uncle through his baptism in this Church and the support he received from his family and the local community here in Ballyhale, was moved by the Spirit and had that sense of being a child of God. *"The spirit you received is not the Spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again"*. Undoubtedly his sense of vocation was motivated by that sense of being a child of God. In placing himself at the service of others as a priest, he saw his task in life as bringing hope through the message of Jesus and in lifting fear from the lives of those he served.

**General:** On his holidays he usually spent an overnight in our house in Dublin before leaving for Kilkenny. A lasting memory for me and my siblings as a child, was the yearly visit to Cleary's to pick out any toy we wanted. We were jealous of our three cousins in Kilcready, as he would spend all the summer with them, most summers when school was finished we would head down to the country to join our uncle.

As children, because of the presence of our uncle, summer for us meant car trips to the sea at Tramore; Ice creams, sweets and summer projects often planned for the year before - e.g. taking the old grey Massey Fergusson completely apart. I can still remember the anticipation waiting to see if it worked when we first turned the ignition after putting it all back together again.

A private - intelligent - knowledgeable man.

Interests in everything - interests in Kilkenny and Shamrocks hurling club.

We also know that he had a dark side, that at times especially in later life, he could be grumpy and preoccupied with himself. But it really was and still is an inspiration to me to have witnessed that he was aware of this weakness, his own sinfulness, and that he regularly sought forgiveness. *"It is the Spirit which makes us cry our 'Father' sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory."*

*"Whole of creation is eagerly waiting for God". "Creation still retains the hope of being freed from slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and Glory as the children of God".*

Whole of creation is groaning in one great act of giving birth. The groaning continues in our own lives.

**Change.** Consider the incredible changes in uncles live and how he coped and adapted to them. In his childhood the effects of the great depression would have been felt, the Irish Civil War and the effects of World War 2, the growth of Communism in China - where he had considered spending his life as a priest, the roaring 60's, Vatican II (as a young boy, I can remember many trips to Veritas for uncle to buy publications explaining Vatican II as he attempted to understand the renewal taking place in the Church), man on the moon, climate change, Vietnam war, famines etc. From the poverty of his childhood to the wealth of the Celtic Tiger. (The growth of Intel and their microchips, manufactured next door to one of the Parishes he served and his interest in all of that) and finally the economic collapse and the Church scandals.

All of these massive changes he lived through in his life. He approached them with a deep faith and with an openness to learn. That process is still going on for each of us; we are part of that process of change and the decisions we make today is forming that future that we are fashioning for ourselves and future generations. Creation does indeed continue to groan.

So, as we honour the memory and the life of my Uncle, let us pray in this Mass that we will be guided by the same Spirit who guided him in life. That in the choices and decisions we make in life that they may be for the building up of the human family and God's kingdom here on earth.

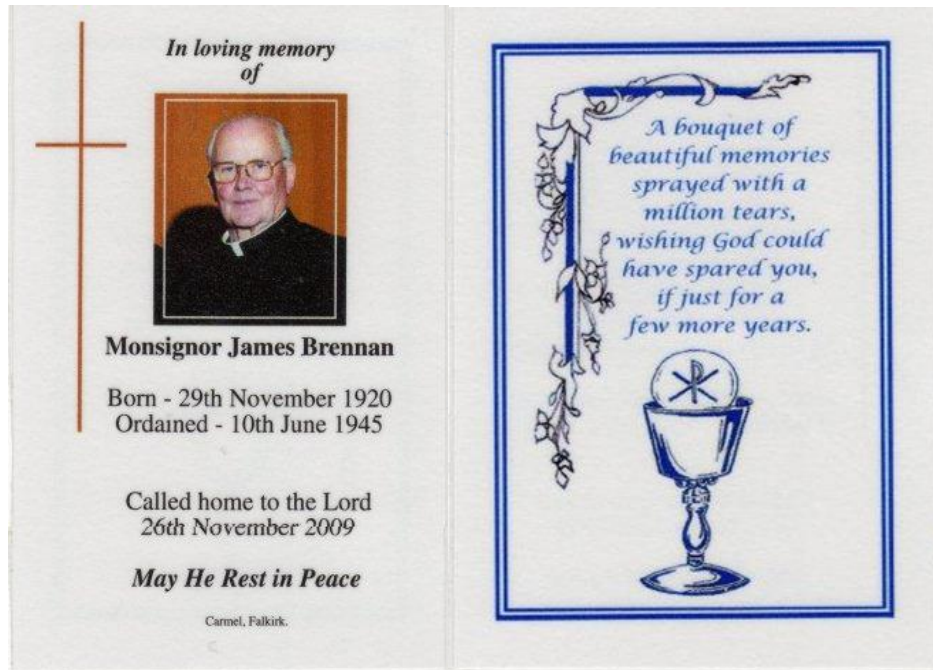
**St Paul:** Creation still retains the hope of being freed. For those who believe, the whole of creation is eagerly waiting for God.

Monsignor Brennan retired as Parish Priest of Bo'ness in 1995. He had been ordained for the Archdiocese in 1945. He had served in St Patrick's Edinburgh (1945 - 1947); St Patrick's Kilsyth (1947 - 1961). He was spiritual Director of St Mary's College, Blairs the national Junior Seminary for Scotland from 1961 - 1966; Parish Priest of St Mary Glenrothes (1966 - 1967); Rector of Blairs from 1967 to 1974.

After his tenure as Rector of Blairs, Monsignor Brennan remained in the Diocese of Aberdeen from 1974 - 1977 as the Parish Priest of Fochabers. In 1977 he was appointed to St Alexander's Denny until 1988 as parish Priest. Monsignor Brennan was transferred to St Mary's Bo'ness as Parish Priest in 1988 where he built the new church there. He retired to Kilkenny in 1995.

When he died he was 88 years of age.

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Monsignor Brennan's Memorial Card

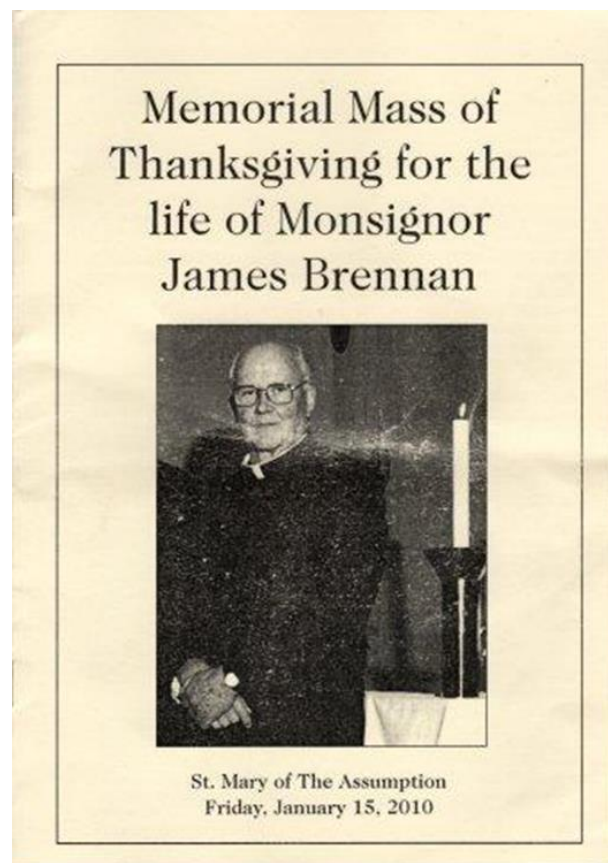


The Church of St Martin of Tours and graveyard, Ballyhale





This picture shows Fr James Brennan and Fr Francis Thompson as young priests in Kilsyth. It is dated 1947/48 as that is the period when both priests were stationed in Kilsyth. Fr Thomson later went on to become the Bishop of Motherwell



**The Desiderata**  
By Max Ehrmann

Go placidly amid the noise and haste,  
and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.  
Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull  
and ignorant; they too have their story.  
Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.  
If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter;  
For there will always be greater and lesser persons than yourself.  
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble,  
it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.  
Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery.  
But let this not blind you to what virtue there is,  
Many persons strive for high ideals and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection.  
Neither be cynical about love, for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment  
it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.  
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune.  
But do not distress yourself with imaginings.  
Many fears are born of fatigue & loneliness.  
Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars,  
You have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you,  
No doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be,  
And whatever your labours and aspirations,  
In the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul.  
With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.  
Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

2

## Entrance

**Spirit of God,  
Come Dwell Within Me**

Spirit of God, come dwell within me.  
Open my heart, O come set me free.  
Fill me with love for Jesus, my Lord.  
O fill me with living water

*Jesus is living, Jesus is here.  
Jesus, my Lord, come closer to me.  
Jesus, our Saviour, dying for me,  
and rising to save his people*

Lord, how I thirst, O Lord, I am weak.  
Lord, come to me,  
you alone do I seek.  
Lord, you are life, and love and hope,  
O fill me with living water

*Jesus is living, Jesus is here.  
Jesus, my Lord, come closer to me.  
Jesus, our Saviour, dying for me,  
and rising to save his people*

Lord, I am blind O Lord, I can't see!  
Stretch out your hand,  
O Lord, comfort me.  
Lead me your way in  
truth and in light,  
O fill me with living water

*Jesus is living, Jesus is here.  
Jesus, my Lord, come closer to me.  
Jesus, our Saviour, dying for me,  
and rising to save his people*



3

## Readings

Isaiah 25:6-9

### Responsorial Psalm

Come back to me with all your heart.  
Don't let fear keep us apart.  
Trees do bend, though straight and tall;  
so must we to others' call.

*Long have I waited for your coming  
home to me and living deeply our  
new life.*

The wilderness will lead you to your  
heart where I will speak.  
Integrity and justice with tenderness  
you shall know.

*Long have I waited for your coming  
home to me and living deeply our  
new life.*

2nd Letter of St Paul to  
the Romans 14:7-12

The Gospel according to  
St Matthew 20:20-28

## Offertory

### Take Our Bread

- Chorus -  
Take our bread, we ask you,  
Take our hearts, we love you,  
Take our lives, oh Father,  
We are yours, we are yours.

Yours as we stand at  
the table you set,  
Yours as we eat the bread  
our hearts can't forget.  
We are the signs of  
your life with us yet;  
We are yours, we are yours.

- Chorus -  
Take our bread, we ask you

Your holy people stand washed in  
your blood,  
Spirit filled, yet hungry,  
we await your food  
Poor though we are,  
we have brought  
Ourselves to you  
We are yours, we are yours

- Chorus -  
Take our bread, we ask you

### Sign of Peace

Shalom my friend,  
Shalom my friend,  
Shalom, Shalom  
The peace of Christ I give you today  
Shalom, Shalom.

## Communion

### As Bread My Lord Comes To Me

As bread my Lord comes to me,  
Though I am unworthy  
He heals me, body and soul,  
And sets my spirit free.  
For He is my Saviour and my God,  
Yes, He is my Saviour and my God.

I am far nearer to Him  
Than the air I breathe.  
With joy I welcome Him home,  
He satisfies my heart's need.  
For He is my Saviour and my God  
Yes, He is my Saviour and my God

The still, small voice that I hear  
Always is reminding  
My soul of love and of peace  
That passeth understanding.  
For He is my Saviour and my God,  
Yes, He is my Saviour and my God

### O Lady Full Of God's Own Grace

O lady, full of God's own grace,  
Whose caring hands the  
child embraced,  
Who listened to the Spirit's word,  
Believed and trusted in the Lord.

*O virgin fair, star of the sea,  
My dearest mother, pray for me (2)*

O lady, who felt daily joy  
In caring for the holy boy,  
Whose home was plain  
and short of wealth,  
Yet was enriched by God's own  
breath.

*O virgin fair, star of the sea,  
My dearest mother, pray for me (2)*

O lady, who bore living's pain  
But still believed that love would reign,  
Who on a hill watched Jesus die  
As on the cross they raised him high

*O virgin fair, star of the sea,  
My dearest mother, pray for me (2)*

O lady, who, on Easter day,  
Had all your sorrow wiped away  
As God the Father's will was done  
When from death's hold he  
freed your Son

*O virgin fair, star of the sea,  
My dearest mother, pray for me (2)*



## Recession

### Our God Reigns

How lovely on the mountains are the  
feet of Him  
Who brings good news, good news  
Proclaiming peace, announcing news  
of happiness  
Our God reigns, our God reigns

*Our God reigns, our God reigns  
Our God reigns, our God reigns*

You watchmen lift your voices joyfully  
as one  
Shout for your King, your King  
See eye to eye the Lord restoring  
Zion  
Your God reigns, your God reigns!

*Our God reigns, our God reigns  
Our God reigns, our God reigns*

Waste places of Jerusalem break  
forth with joy  
We are redeemed, redeemed  
The Lord has saved and comforted  
His people  
Your God reigns, your God reigns

*Our God reigns, our God reigns  
Our God reigns, our God reigns*

Ends of the earth, see the salvation  
of your God  
Jesus is Lord, is Lord  
Before the nations He has bared His  
holy arm  
Your God reigns, your God reigns

*Our God reigns, our God reigns  
Our God reigns, our God reigns*



6

## Monsignor James Brennan

### Date & Place of Birth

29 November 1920, Ballyhale, Thomastown,  
Co. Kilkenny

### Parents

Patrick Brennan (Ballintee) and  
Johanna Walsh (Ballyhale)

### Family

Sisters: Beedie Eileen & Maureen  
Brothers: Phil & Dick

### Education

Ballyhale National School, Co. Kilkenny  
St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny [Secondary]  
St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny [Seminary]

### Ordination

10 June 1945 - St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny

### Appointments

1945-1947 Curate at St. Patrick's, Edinburgh  
1947-1961 Curate at St. Patrick's, Kilsyth  
1961-1966 Spiritual Director at St. Mary's College, Blairs  
1966-1967 Founded a new Parish at St. Mary's, Glenrothes  
1967-1974 Rector at St. Mary's College, Blairs  
1974-1977 Parish Priest at St. Mary's, Fochabers  
1977-1988 Parish Priest at St. Alexander's, Denny  
1988-1995 Parish Priest at St. Mary of the Assumption, Bo'ness

### Retired to Kilkenny in 1995

### Called Home To The Lord on 26th November 2009

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam d'áis*

May his faithful soul be at God's side



7

Order of service from Mgr Brennan's funeral Mass

Diocese, where he was parish priest in Fochabers, as well as serving both as spiritual director and as rector in the National Senior Seminary at Blairs.

Mgr Brennan was ordained for the archdiocese in 1945 and served in St Patrick's, Edinburgh from 1945 to 1947. After St Patrick's he spent 14 years in Kilsyth, leaving for Blairs in 1961.

There he served as spiritual director until 1966, before spending a short time as parish priest of St Mary's in Glenrothes in 1966 and 1967. He returned to Blairs thereafter, this time as rector and remained in that position until 1974.

After his tenure as rector in Blairs, he stayed on in the Aberdeen Diocese until 1977, this time as parish priest in Fochabers, after which he returned to St Alexander's, Denny, until 1988, as parish priest. He was transferred to Bo'ness as parish priest in 1988, overseeing the building of the new church there.

Mgr Brennan retired as parish priest in Bo'ness in 1995 and returned to Kilkenny. He was 88. May he rest in peace.

**MGR JAMES BRENNAN  
1921-2009**

MGR JAMES Brennan, priest of St Andrews and Edinburgh Archdiocese died peacefully on November 26 at his home in Kilkenny, shortly after being diagnosed with leukaemia.

He was well-known both in



Fr James Brennan visits St Patrick's Parish in December 1971 for the Christmas Fayre